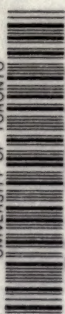


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JULIAN GRENFELL

BY
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JULIAN GRENFELL

JULIAN GRENFELL had such shining qualities of youth, such strength and courage and love, that to others who are young he seems like the perfection of themselves. They know so well day by day just what their own youth can fall to and rise to ; and it is when their youth rises most, to its utmost fierceness and tenderness, that they come near to him, who was made of those things. And the young can mourn in their own special way the young that die ; it is they who realize that when a man of few years dies, a mature man and an old man die too ; and it is they who have ahead of them all their maturity and age in which still to want the companionship that has failed. They look forward to all those "partings still to be." They have lost a known friend now, but all their lives they will be losing someone different, and unimaginable. (It is one of the terrors of their loss of one they love—the thought that in what he would have become and said and thought and done, he is unknown like a stranger.) They know that hardly an event will arise in their most distant days which will not be far less than it might have been. As they look forward to their sure and simple possessions which they prize, weather and firelight and activity and growth, the friend who would have contributed a richness they cannot imagine is only a phantom there—dear, and growing stranger. They have plenty of time ahead to be losers of so many things—what, they will never know. The young are like a mourner who lingers on at a grave after all the others have departed.

When Julian Grenfell, who died when he was twenty-seven, sent home from the trenches his poem *Into Battle* he not only sent great and pure poetry but also tidings about the fighter that had the sound of his own single discovery. The noble self-sacrifice of the fighter was well known, and in everyone's heart ; the mere adventurous joy in the clash of arms with which some could carry through this many-sided task of battle was known

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too. But, though it may not have fallen to Julian Grenfell alone to feel, it has fallen to him alone to express those two things so combined until they brought to him the certainty of Nature's utter sanction of the fighter, and the consciousness of the whole universe upholding him with all her mysteries. For what he wrote of a kind of natural ecstasy in the upright soldier's heart, Julian Grenfell is among the most notable figures of an age at war. And in another way he was a shining example of one of the great qualities the war has brought to light—that of filial love.

He was born, the eldest son of Lord Desborough, in 1888, and went first to Summer Fields, and then to Eton and Oxford. He and his brother Billy were like twins, though Julian was two years older. During the whole of their school and college career they made one long record of triumphs, so that in all those years of Summer Fields, Eton and Balliol, as each time there arose the crisis of suspense when examinations drew near, so each time came news of the uttermost success. When Julian left Summer Fields for Eton at the age of thirteen he already had a serious conscious love of religion such as was the tradition of his home. He was to have a life of wild physical activity, but he had a faith which could never be outstripped or left apart even from the boldest venture. He linked his belief to all the physical activities that he so much loved. Faith has been carried among strange scenes and places by men in their enterprises, but faith has ridden her maddest rides with Julian, and with him on horseback made her wildest leaps into the air. All his life, faith was the implicit companion of his energies. But now this thirteen-year-old belief was a very definite straightforward thing, and had its expression in the simplest words. He was still at Summer Fields. There had been a very bad thunderstorm. He said: "I suddenly seemed to realize God." It was with him as with the poet who wrote: "I saw Eternity the other night." In his after life he again referred more than once to what he had experienced then. In his early years at Eton he began his love of Thomas à Kempis.

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The holidays were rich for the two boys with every kind of sport. Julian had begun at seven years old to follow and track animals ; and at that age he could fire a gun, and could, with Billy, catch nineteen trout in an afternoon. They also went out stalking with their father. As they grew older, the holidays were filled with riding and shooting and fishing. At Baledmund, Julian got up at five every morning to go out after roe-deer, and here a season's record of the two boys together was: "277 grouse, 41 partridges, 5 woodcock, 6 snipe, 4 caper-cailzie, 33 hares, 210 rabbits and 6 roe-deer." Julian was master of the Eton Beagles while he was also editor of the *Eton Chronicle*, and near the top of the Sixth Form.

In October, 1906, Julian went to Balliol. He was 6 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in height ; and Billy, who was sixteen, was taller. They were growing fast. In 1909 Billy went to Balliol too. They were both so full of happiness of life, there was no failure for them anywhere in their work or in their sport or in their friends. Billy wrote once: "I wish I was not so passionately addicted to pleasure ; I find myself plotting for it every moment of the day, especially when I ought to be thinking of that solemn humbug Aristotle." Only Julian at one time seemed occasionally cold and removed from those around him ; he was reproached for not knowing more people in college ; and free and general intercourse continued for a while to be a difficulty with him in spite of his great love for his great friends, and he said : " I wish social plans had one neck and me a knife." Billy, writing after Julian had died to a friend who had known him at Oxford, said : " You knew all the mysticism and idealism, and that strange streak of melancholy which underlay Julian's war-whooping, sun-bathing, fearless exterior." And sometimes Julian was ill and depressed, the result of his great growth, and because he never spared his body the rigorous training necessary to the athlete. The worst form depression could take with him was when he felt himself separated from God. If he lost his sense of communion with God, he could not be happy or well until he was possessed of it again.

Reading aloud had been a great feature of their young

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family life, and lasted after they were grown up. When they were away they liked to send their mother lists of what they read. From Billy, for instance: "I am reading, in various stages, *The Shaving of Shagpat*, *The Egoist*, *Redgauntlet*, Garibaldi, the Homeric Hymns, Aristotle, and Virgil." And from Julian: "I've read Gilbert Murray's *Hippolytus* again—the best thing ever; some Dante Rossetti; the Psalms; the *Imitatio Christi*; and Belloc, endlessly." Nothing of what they read or what they did was complete until they had discussed it with their mother.

And this leads to the crowning glory of their lives, so that in any record which is permitted of them there is one quality which must stand out beyond all their other ones; they were two young men who had a passion of filial love. This is a kind of love which the war has revealed in such a degree that its quality can be plainly seen and dwelt upon, like a comet that has swum closer. It has found most beautiful expression in many books of privately-printed letters, both in French and English. Its quality is different from the two other great forms of love, maternal love, and men and women's love. It is not, like those, prompted by Nature; it is one of the emotions that belong to man when he transcends Nature, and takes upon himself divine virtue. Nature inspires those other loves, and adorns them with joy and rewards them with happiness. But filial love has not even a beginning in Nature, it is not found there, and is divine from the first. And never can it have been more faithful and more passionate than it was in these two. It was never narrowed down to ties of habit or gratitude or dependence, for with them it was beauty, it was humour, it was thought, it was the best of life.

In 1910 Julian's brilliant time at Oxford came to an end. His horizon widened to take in distant countries to which he would soon travel—to take in, too, all the distant hopes of his mind eager for truth. He had written from Balliol: "I utterly agree that building up character for its own sake is a blank dead thing, with no ultimate end . . . But I am just dimly beginning to see *my* end, I do believe;

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very little and very dim, but still a beginning. And of course I agree that an ultimate end must satisfy all the needs of the soul ; it must do more than that, it must be far, far, far above and beyond all those needs, a pure ideal, something wholly unattainable, you must have millions of miles of outlook." It had been arranged from earliest years that he was to be a soldier, and that Billy would go to the Bar. Julian passed in to the army First of all the University candidates. His regiment, the Royal Dragoons, was in India ; his last months in England, before joining it, were full of the joy of keen sport and of his friends. One of the best loved companions of Julian's life was Lord Lucas ; they had their unspeakable gallantry in common, both in life and death. This friend wrote when Julian died : " You know that I was fonder of Julian than of any living man, and never can anyone else be the same to me as he was . . . I think of all the happy times we had, and of his spirits, his keenness, his skill, his intense enjoyment of everything that boy or man, sportsman or poet, loves ; and it seems that a great part of my life is torn from me."

In November Julian sailed for India, and there the new forms of sport, the buck-stalking and polo, filled him with delight. " The pig-sticking is beyond dreams, I can't tell you what it means to me ; it is coursing with human greyhounds." He wrote, too : " The rains have come, but not real continuous rains ; we go out on odd days to stick pig, in country blind with new bright green grass, so that you gallop down a hidden well without any warning and without much surprise. I'm afraid all other sports will fall flat after this." And he has got the very essence of sport—iron-hardness, and suspense, and glorious speed—into his letters from " this jungly place,"—where " directly the rains come, the grass grows as fast as a horse galloping."

In the winter of 1911 the regiment was moved to South Africa. At first Julian was dismayed by the change and felt himself an outcast in a barren place. In a letter he said : " I do hate thinking of having missed a wonderful English spring, in this pestilential continent where spring makes no difference, and comes in

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the autumn.” But soon he said : “ I am getting fond of it in a way, almost against my better self,” and he grew to love the veldt with its “ terrific greatness and greenness and dullness and bleakness.” In South Africa he had his greyhounds with him ; he had always had a special love for these animals ; he had owned them from the time when he was nineteen, when in an autumn in Scotland the whole family after packing themselves into a small motor for excursions would have the greyhounds poured on the top of them like water. He now wrote a poem *To a Black Greyhound*, of which this is part :

Shining black in the shining light,
Inky black in the golden sun,
Graceful as the swallow’s flight,
Light as swallow, wingèd one,
Swift as driven hurricane,
Double-sinewed stretch and spring,
Muffled thud of flying feet—
See the black dog galloping,
Hear his wild foot-beat.

See him lie when the day is dead,
Black curves curled on the boarded floor.
Sleepy eyes, my sleepy-head—
Eyes that were aflame before.
Gentle now, they burn no more ;
Gentle now and softly warm,
With the fire that made them bright
Hidden—as when after storm
Softly falls the night.

He wrote : “ I’ve never had such good long dogs as now ; four great big lashing dogs, and this little pup, who is the best of the lot. I do think that greyhounds are the most beautiful things on earth ; they have got all the *really* jolly things—affection, and courage unspeakable, and speed like nothing else, and sensitiveness and dash and grace and gentleness, and enthusiasm.” He never cared to be parted from them. He took some greyhounds even out to France with him, and in one of the last letters that he wrote before he received his mortal wound he

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said : "The long dogs were very good when I got back here. A kind woman at the farm had kept and fed them for me. One had been run over by a motor-bus, but was none the worse. We arrived in the middle of the night, and when they heard my voice they came out of the yard like shrapnel bursting. 'Comrade' jumped up on to my horse's shoulder, and when he fell back they all started fighting like hell from sheer joy!" In South Africa he also played polo. "My ponies," he said, "are like Greek sculpture, only with a neater style of galloping; just think how tired it would make you to play eight chukkers on horses which always had four legs in the air at once." He wrote also : "The ground is composed of holes and stones, thinly covered by a rough grass called *Pratistricula*. Thus for the horseman two alternatives lie open. Either you fall over the stone into the hole; when all that has to be done is to roll the stone on top of you, and write the epitaph on it. Or, if you are careless enough to come down in the hole, and fall on to the stone, they have to lift your body, place it back in the hole, lift the stone, clean it, roll it on top of you, etc.—which means 'more work for the undertaker.' I hope you follow me?" Julian was a renowned boxer, and he scattered challenges into the unknown. Of a fight he had in Johannesburg he wrote :

A man who was in training for the Amateur Championship said he would come and fight me. He was a fireman, called Tye; he used to be a sailor, and he looked as hard as a hammer. I quaked in my shoes when I saw him, and quaked more when I heard he was 2 to 1 on favourite for the Championship, and quaked most when my trainer went to see him, and returned with word that he had knocked out two men in a quarter of an hour. We went into the ring on the night, and he came straight for me like a tiger, and hit left and right; I stopped the left, but it knocked my guard aside, and he crashed his right clean on to the point of my jaw. I was clean knocked out; but by the fluke of Heaven I recovered and came to and got on my feet again by the time they had counted six. I could hardly stand, and I could only see a white blur in front of me; but I just had sense to keep my guard up, and hit hard at the blur whenever it came within range. He knocked me down twice more, but my head was

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clearing every moment, and I felt a strange sort of confidence that I was master of him. I put him down in the second round, with a right counter, which shook him ; he took a count of eight. In the third round I went in to him, and beat his guard down—then crossed again with the right, and felt it go right home, with all my arm and body behind it. I knew it was the end, when I hit ; and he never moved for twenty seconds. They said it was the best fight they had seen for years in Johannesburg, and my boxing men went clean off their heads, and carried me twice round the hall. I was 11 stone 4 lb., and he was 11 stone 3 lb., and I think it was the best fight I shall ever have.

All this time in India and South Africa he was working hard at his profession. He had, too, been kept supplied with books from England. He wrote : "Thank you for copying 'Since there's no help.' I'm reading no literature now, only Military Law with both eyes ; it is just the opposite to literature, and is expressed throughout in just the wrong words and just the wrong way." He said in another letter in relation to a book he had read : "I hate material books, centred on whether people are successful. I like books about artists and philosophers and dreamers and anybody who is a little off his dot." He wrote again : "I agree with what you say about success, but I like the people best who take it as it comes, or doesn't come, and are busy about unpractical and ideal things in their heart of hearts all the time." Julian was now as always fulfilling his "great task of happiness," which made all his life seem like one long act of praise. "I'm so happy here," he wrote, "I love the Profession of Arms, and I love my fellow officers and all my dogs and all my horses." In the midst of cramming for his Promotion Examination he made a high jump on his horse Kangaroo which was a record for South Africa, clearing 6 ft. 5 in. over a wall with bricks on the top.

In July, 1914, he was dwelling on the prospect of leave in England when the first rumours of war reached him. He longed for England for different reasons now. He was afraid at first that his regiment might be kept in South Africa or sent to Egypt. He wrote : "Don't you think

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it has been a wonderful and almost incredible rally to the Empire ; with Redmond and the Hindus and Will Crooks and the Boers and the South Fiji Islanders all aching to come and throw stones at the Germans. It reinforces one's failing belief in the Old Flag and the Mother Country and the Heavy Brigade and the Thin Red Line, and all the Imperial Idea, which gets rather shadowy in peace time, don't you think ? But this has proved it to be a real enough thing."

On September 20th Julian reached England and went with his regiment straight to Salisbury Plain. He had two days' leave at home. On the night of October 5th the Royals left for France. "It seems *too* good to be off at last," Julian wrote : "Everyone is perfectly bird."

Julian's sister Monica had already become in the first days of the war a probationer at the London Hospital, and Billy had got his commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade. It had been suggested to Billy that he might postpone joining the Army until after the All Souls' Examination in the autumn, for which he had been working hard. But he could not stay for the fruits of his work any more than he could stay for other things that made life glorious to him. They were already beginning to lose their friends—that great company of their friends who would soon lie dead on many battle-fields, one of whom, Charles Lister, wrote just before he was killed in Gallipoli : "I know now that I shall live. I do not mean that I may not be killed." The first of these to go was Billy's dearest friend, John Manners, who in September was wounded and missing and was never heard of again. Billy translated from the Latin a poem written about him by Mr. Headlam :

O heart-and-soul and careless played
Our little band of brothers,
And never recked the time would come
To change our games for others.
It's joy for those who played with you
To picture now what grace
Was in your mind and single heart
And in your radiant face.

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Your light-foot strength by flood and field
For England keener glowed ;
To whatsoever things are fair
We know, through you, the road ;
Nor is our grief the less thereby ;
O swift and strong and dear, Good-bye.

These are extracts from some of Julian's letters from Flanders :

"We have been fighting night and day ; first rest to-day for four days. The worst of it is, no sleep practically. I cannot tell you how wonderful our men were, going straight for the first time into a fierce fire. They surpassed my utmost expectations. I have never been so fit or nearly so happy in my life before. I adore the fighting, and the continual interest which compensates for every disadvantage."

"I longed to be able to say that I liked it, after all one has heard of being under fire for the first time. But it is beastly. I pretended to myself for a bit that I liked it, but it was no good, it only made one careless and unwatchful and self-absorbed ; but when one acknowledged to oneself that it *was* beastly, one became all right again, and cool. After the firing had slackened, we advanced again a bit into the next group of houses, which were the edge of the village proper. I cannot tell you how *muddling* it is. We did not know which was our front. We did not know whether our own troops had come round us on the flanks, or whether they had stopped behind and were firing into us. And besides, a lot of German snipers were left in the houses we had come through, and every now and then bullets came singing by from God knows where. Four of us were talking and laughing in the road, when about a dozen bullets came with a whistle. We all dived for the nearest door, and fell over each other, yelling with laughter, into a very dirty outhouse. James Leckie, the Old Old Man, said 'I have a bullet through my best Sandon twillette breeches.' We looked, and he had. It had gone clean through. He did not tell us till two days afterwards that it had gone through him too."

"Here we are, in the burning centre of it all, and I

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would not be anywhere else for a million pounds and the Queen of Sheba. The only thing is that there's no job for the cavalry. So we have just become infantry, and man the trenches. I believe we're getting entrenching tools, which is good hearing. We want them. Colonel Burn is taking this, so I've only time to write one word of love. He's off. He tells me I was reported dead. But there's life in the old dog yet! Bless you both."

"I have not washed for a week; or had my boots off for a fortnight. But we cook good hot food in the dark, in the morning before we start, and in the night when we get back to our horses; and we take our good cold rations with us in the daytime. It is all *the* best fun. I have never, never felt so well, or so happy, or enjoyed anything so much. It just suits my stolid health, and stolid nerves, and barbaric disposition. The fighting-excitement vitalizes everything, every sight and word and action. One loves one's fellow-man so much more when one is bent on killing him. And picnicking in the open day and night (we never see a roof now) is the real method of existence. There are loads of straw to bed-down on, and one sleeps like a log, and wakes up with the dew on one's face. The stolidity of my nerves surprises myself. I went to sleep the other day when we were lying in the trenches, with the shrapnel bursting within fifty yards all the time, and a noise like nothing on earth. The noise is continual and indescribable. The Germans shell the trenches with shrapnel all day and all night; and the Reserves and ground in the rear with Jack Johnsons, which at last one gets to love as old friends. You hear them coming for miles, and everyone imitates the noise; then they burst with a plump and make a great hole in the ground, doing no damage unless they happen to fall into your trench or on to your hat. They burst pretty nearly straight upwards. One landed within ten yards of me the other day, and only knocked me over and my horse. We both got up and looked at each other, and laughed. It did not even knock the cigarette out of my mouth. . . . We took a German officer and some men prisoners in a wood the other day. One felt hatred for them as one thought of

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our dead ; and as the officer came by me, I scowled at him, and the men were cursing him. The officer looked me in the face and saluted me as he passed, and I have never seen a man look so proud and resolute and smart and confident, in his hour of bitterness. It made me feel terribly ashamed of myself."

"About the shells; after a day of them, one's nerves are really absolutely beaten down. I can understand now why our infantry have to retreat sometimes; a sight which came as a shock to one at first, after being brought up in the belief that the English infantry cannot retreat. . . . We had been worried by their snipers all along, and I had always been asking for leave to go out and have a try myself. Well, on Tuesday the 16th, the day before yesterday, they gave me leave. Only after great difficulty. They told me to take a section with me, and I said I would sooner cut my throat and have done with it. So they let me go alone. Off I crawled through sodden clay and trenches, going about a yard a minute, and listening and looking as I thought it was not possible to look and listen. I went out to the right of our lines, where the 10th were, and where the Germans were nearest. I took about thirty minutes to do thirty yards; then I saw the Hun trench, and I waited there a long time, but could see or hear nothing. It was about ten yards from me. Then I heard some Germans talking, and saw one put his head up over some bushes, about ten yards behind the trench. I could not get a shot at him; I was too low down, and of course I could not get up. So I crawled on again very slowly to the parapet of their trench. It was very exciting. I was not *sure* that there might not have been someone there, or a little further along the trench. I peered through their loop-hole and saw nobody in the trench. Then the German behind put his head up again. He was laughing and talking. I saw his teeth glistening against my foresight, and I pulled the trigger very slowly. He just grunted, and crumpled up. The others got up and whispered to each other. I do not know which were most frightened, them or me. I think there were four or five of them. They could not trace

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the shot ; I was flat behind their parapet and hidden. I just had the nerve not to move a muscle and stay there. My heart was fairly hammering. They did not come forward, and I could not see them, as they were behind some bushes and trees, so I crept back inch by inch.

"I went out again in the afternoon, in front of our bit of the line. About sixty yards off I found their trench again, empty again. I waited there for an hour, but saw nobody. Then I went back, because I did not want to get inside some of their patrols who might have been placed forward. I reported the trench empty.

"The next day, just before dawn, I crawled out there again, and found it empty again. Then a single German came through the woods towards the trench. I saw him fifty yards off. He was coming along upright and careless, making a great noise. I heard him before I saw him. I let him get within twenty-five yards, and shot him in the heart. He never made a sound. Nothing for ten minutes, and then there was a noise and talking, and a lot of them came along, through the wood behind the trench about forty yards from me. I counted about twenty, and there were more coming. They halted in front, and I picked out the one I thought was the officer, or sergeant. He stood facing the other way, and I had a steady shot at him behind the shoulders. He went down, and that was all I saw. I went back at a sort of galloping crawl to our lines, and sent a message to the 10th that the Germans were moving up their way in some numbers. Half an hour afterwards they attacked the 10th and our right, in massed formation, advancing slowly to within ten yards of the trenches. We simply mowed them down. It was rather horrible. I was too far to the left. They did not attack our part of the line, but the 10th told me in the evening that they counted 200 dead in a little bit of the line, and the 10th and us only lost ten.

"They have made quite a ridiculous fuss about me stalking, and getting the message through. I believe they are going to send me up to our General and all sorts. It was only up to someone to do it, instead of leaving it all to the Germans, and losing two officers a day through

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snipers. All our men have started it now. It is the popular amusement."

He was twice mentioned in despatches, and when he came home for a week's leave in December he was wearing the D.S.O. ribbon. At the end of January, 1915, he again came back for a week, his last leave. In May he sent home the poem *Into Battle*:

The naked earth is warm with Spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the sunny breeze ;
And Life is Colour and Warmth and Light,
And a striving evermore for these ;
And he is dead who will not fight ;
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth ;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth ;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven
Hold him in their high comradeship,
The Dog-Star and the Sisters Seven,
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend,
They gently speak in the windy weather ;
They guide to valley and ridges' end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, " Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing
Sing well, for you may not sing another ;
Brother, sing."

In dreary, doubtful, waiting hours,
Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers ;
O patient eyes, courageous hearts !

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And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind,
And only Joy of Battle takes
Him by the throat, and makes him blind—
Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still,
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.
The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings ;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

Battle-poems are as various as any other kind of poem. The mere fighting-song usually ranks about on a level with the drinking-song. And though a poem of the actual movement of battle, of the march or the charge, may be fine, there is generally more passion in the war-poem that is still,—the poem that is written in the pause ; the poem not of the end of battle, but of interval, of time for breathing and the recovery of consciousness of self after self-abandonment. And such is this poem. It is a wonderful work of the stillness of a soul's consciousness of itself. It is a fortunate man who can thus gather himself up in the realization of the duty he is about, and be so sure and so happy. Other people—gathering themselves up in the calm of duties that are yet not terrible and not perplexing and not ambiguous as the duties of war must be—wait long and in vain to feel such certainty and such joy.

On the evening of May 12th the Royals were put about 500 yards behind the front line, near the Ypres-Menin Road, to support an attack on the German trenches running north from Hooze Lake. The Royals were behind a small hill : Julian spoke of it afterwards as the little hill of death. Early in the morning of the 13th the Germans started a terrific bombardment of this hill. Julian went up to the look-out post. He was knocked over by a shell, which only bruised him. He went down again and made the report of his observations. He then volunteered to get through with a message to the Somerset Yeomanry

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in the front line, which he succeeded in doing under very heavy fire. When he returned he again went up the hill, with his General. A shell burst four yards away, knocking them both down in a heap. A splinter had struck Julian's head. He said : " Go down, Sir, don't bother about me ; I'm done." The General helped to carry him down, and was wounded while doing so. Julian revived, but said to a brother officer : " Do you know, I think I shall die." When he was contradicted he said : " Well, you see if I don't." He was taken to the clearing-station. He asked there whether he was going to die, and said : " I only want to know ; I am not in the least afraid." He was then taken to the hospital at Boulogne, his sister coming from the Wimereux hospital, where she was nursing, to give him the care that he so loved to have from her. The surgeon asked him how long he had been unconscious after he was hit. He said : " I was up before the count." He had his parents beside him. His strength and youth were fighting against the deadly poison of his wound. During all those eleven days when he lay there he prayed, probably unaware that he often spoke aloud. Sometimes he prayed that he might be able to bear the pain. The Psalms and the hymns of his childhood were said to him aloud ; that was what he liked, also George Herbert's poems. The weather was very hot ; those beside him heard him repeat the song in *Hippolytus* :

"O for a deep and dewy spring,
With runlets cold to draw and drink,
And a great meadow blossoming,
Long-grassed, and poplars in a ring,
To rest me by the brink.

O, take me to the Mountain ; O,
Past the great pines and through the wood,
Up where the lean hounds softly go,
A-whine for wild things' blood,
And madly flies the dappled roe.
O God, to shout and speed them there,
An arrow by my chestnut hair
Drawn tight, and one keen glimmering spear—
Ah, if I could! "

Julian Grenfell

“ His voice was very weak. He said it with overpowering longing.”

Billy arrived in France with his regiment, and came to Julian's bedside—not, though they were like one soul, to mourn (during that time Julian never saw a face he loved look sad), but still to know the joy and triumph of all their living moments. And without having spoken one word contrary to that spirit of noble unfailing happiness, but having uttered many words of love, Julian died on the afternoon of May 26th.

Billy was already in the trenches, and during June and July he was constantly under fire. He wrote of Julian : “ I love to think that he has attained that perfection and fullness of life for which he sought so untiringly. I seem to hear him cheering me on in moments of stress here with even more vivid power. There is no one whose victory over the grave can be more complete.” He also wrote : “ Death is such a frail barrier out here, men cross it so smilingly and gallantly every day, one cannot feel it as a severing in any way. Pray that I may bear myself bravely when the burning moment breaks.” In July he wrote to his mother : “ Darling Julian is so constantly beside me, and laughs so debonairly at my qualms and hesitations. I pray for one-tenth of his courage.” On July 30th Billy was killed in a charge to take trenches near the Hooge crater. Leading his platoon, he attempted to cross the 250 yards of open ground under terrific machine-gun fire. He had gone 70 or 80 yards when he pitched forward dead. He was perfectly fearless ; he had been loved in an uncommon way for his great and lovely gifts, and it was said by his men that he had raised the standard of goodness about him.

What can be our attitude of mind towards those who die thus and also towards those who endure their loss ? When pain and grief overwhelm their victims and conquer their endurance, then those who are within reach can bring their charity and lay it at the feet of the suffering—all their most tender charity of love and compassion. But there are times when that charity is defied by something that is more heavenly than itself. Charity is a virtue of

Julian Grenfell

the earth ; its pity, its tolerance and its love, are like white angels dedicated to be the guardians of human failing and grief and sin, and in a sense charity will fade out in heaven like a ghost in daylight. And so even on earth it can stand aside, unneeded, while there go past swift figures, wounded by suffering and loss and death, their faces bright, too bright for resignation and too bright for pity—and to watch such a figure go by is to see the immortal spirit.

VIOLA MEYNELL.

APPENDIX

Letter written to Julian's mother by Charles Lister, not long before he was killed :

Blue Sisters Convent, Malta.

I can't write what I feel about dear Julian. The void is so terrible for me, and the thought of it quite unmans me. I'd so few ties with the life I left when I went abroad—so few that is to say that I wanted to keep, and I always felt as sure of Julian's love as he did of mine, and so certain of seeing his dear old smile just the same. . . .

I suppose everybody noticed dear Julian's vitality, but I don't think they were so conscious of that great tenderness of heart that underlay it. He always showed it most with you ; and with women generally it was his special charm. I think now of the way he used to take my hand if he had felt disappointed with anything I had done and then found out why I'd done it. I remember a time when he was under the impression that I'd chucked Socialism for the " loaves and fishes," etc., etc.; and of course that sort of thing he couldn't abide, and he thought this for a longish while ; then found out that it wasn't that after all, and took my hand in his in the most loving way.

I don't suppose many people knew what an ardent love he had for honesty of purpose, and intellectual honesty, and what sacrifices he made for them ; and sacrifices of peace-of-mind abhorrent to most Englishmen. . . . Julian, in his search for truth, and in his search for what he believed to be his true self, caused himself no end of worry and unhappiness, and was a martyr who lit his own fires with unflinching nerve. Out stalking, he always wanted to do his own work, and he was just the same in his inner life. Surely the Lady he sought with tireless faith, the Lady for whom he did and dared so much on lonely paths will now reward him ? God, it is glorious to think of a soul so wholly devoid of the pettiness and humbug, the cynicism and dishonesty of so much that we see. There is a story in one of Miss Kingsley's books of a West African Medicine-man, who found himself at death's door. He applied all his herbs and spells, and conducted all his well-worn rites before his idols, and with his friends' intercessions—without any effect. At last he wearied of his hocus-pocus, and took his idols and charms down to the sea-shore and flung them into the surf, and he said, " Now I will be a man and meet my God alone." Julian, from the time I knew him, had flung away his idols and had met God. His intense moral courage distinguished him even more than his physical bravery from the run of common men—and his physical bravery was remarkable enough, whether he was hunting, boxing, or whatever he was at.

Julian Grenfell

I think he found his true self on what we all knew would be the scene of his glory ; and it is some melancholy satisfaction that his services received recognition. What must make you still happier is the glorious glowing tone of those letters of his, and the knowledge that his last few months were "crowded hours of glorious life"—stronger in death in that they abide. I shall never forget how much they heartened me, when I came to see you to get your kind offices for this show. The recollection of them will be a constant strength. No one wrote of the War like that, or talked of it that way—and so many went from Leave, or after healing wounds, as a duty, but without joy. Julian, apart from the physical delight he had in combat, felt keenly, I am sure, that he was doing something worth while in the world ; and looked on death and the passing beyond as a final burst into glory. He was rather Franciscan in his love of all things that are, in his absence of fear of all God's creatures—death included.

He stood for something very precious to me—for an England of my dreams, made of honest, brave, and tender men ; and his life and death have surely done something towards the realization of that England. Julian had so many friends who felt for him as they felt for no one else, and a fierce light still beats on the scene of his passing, and others are left to whom he may leave his sword and a portion of his skill.

You must have known all this splendour of Julian's life far better than I did, so I don't know why I should write all this. But I am so sad myself that I must say something to you, because you know how very fond I was of Julian.

One can seek comfort at this time in the consciousness of the greatness of our dead, and the work they have left behind them, and the love we have borne them : and such comfort is surely yours—apart from any larger Hope.

Yours affectionately,

C. LISTER.



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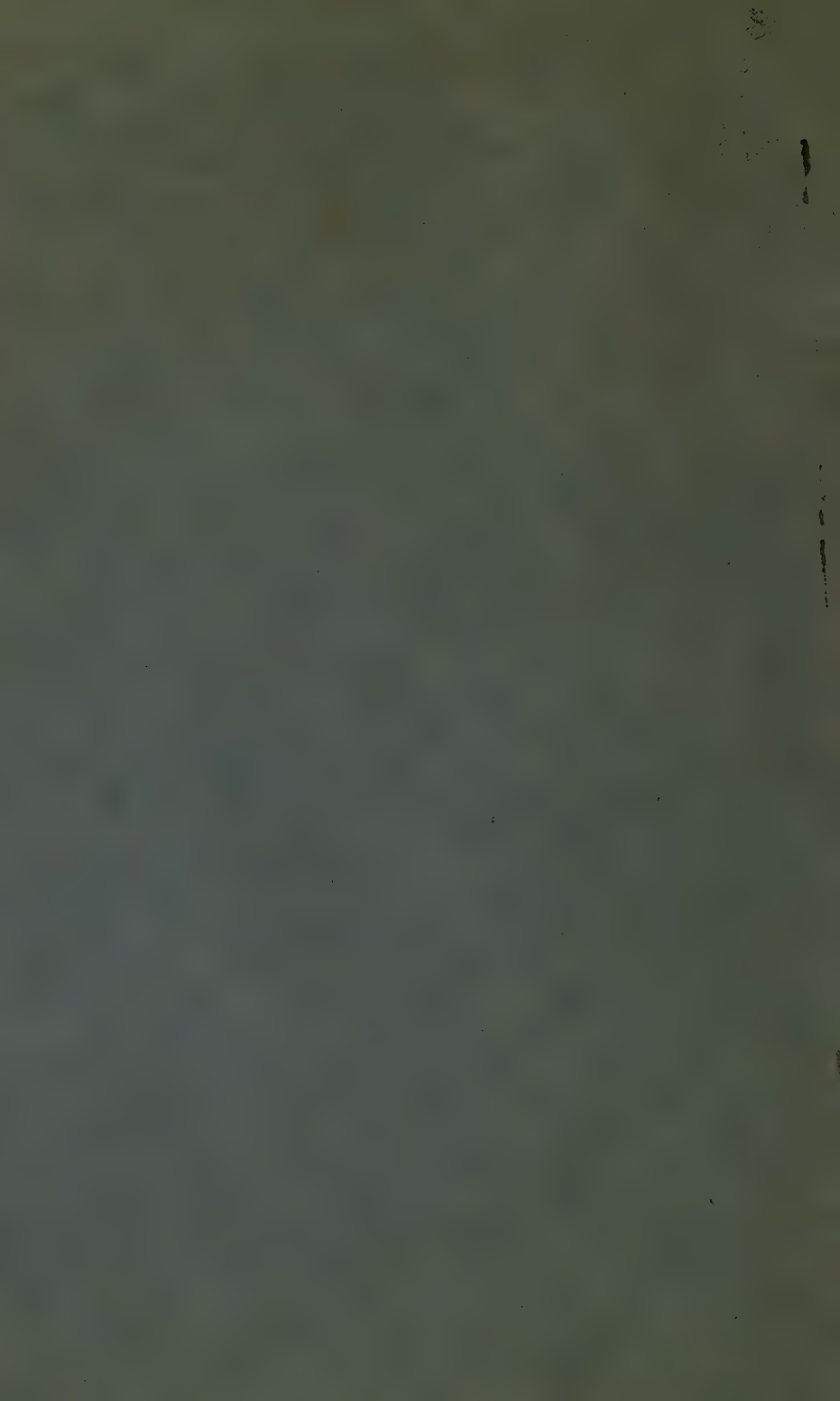
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